

tell the former President “enough”? “no more”? “you have gone too far”? “this must stop”?

You were all here on January 6, as I was. You know those Capitol Police and Metropolitan Police risked their lives to defend you and me. Will you now defend them when they are being smeared so scandalously?

We are here on a Sunday, working to pass a historic bipartisan plan to build the backbone of a strong 21st century economy that benefits all Americans. Can't we also have a bipartisan backbone to defend the men and women who defended the Capitol on January 6?

A few minutes ago, I walked into the building. They were there. You know they are going to be there to protect you, the men and women of the Capitol Police. Theirs is a dangerous job now, more dangerous because of January 6. We salute them for their bravery, and those who have questioned that bravery have really gone too far.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on another topic, the most frustrating aspect of America's COVID response isn't that we are being asked to wear masks again—I have my mask here—in COVID hotspots; the most maddening part of this pandemic is that Americans could have put this virus in their rearview mirror long ago.

We could have saved thousands of lives. Over 600,000 Americans are dead from COVID-19. We could have prevented a great deal of the economic pain this pandemic has inflicted on America's families and businesses. We are here now, battling a new surge and a more dangerous strain of coronavirus, in large part, because the people with big megaphones chose, cynically and cowardly and cruelly, to spread doubt and denial about this virus and the vaccines that prevent it. Their lies cost lives.

Fortunately, this past week seems to mark a turning point for America. Leaders in both the public and private sectors are stepping up for the common good and requiring their workers to get vaccinated or to get tested regularly to show they are not sick and not a danger to others. If you want the job, get the jab. It is time.

President Biden also announced that all Federal workers must get vaccinated or tested. I commend his decision. That is leadership, and it will save lives.

And to some who come to the floor of the Senate and to other places to say that the government should operate more like a business, take note: Some of the most innovative employers—Google, Netflix, Disney—have also announced that their workers will have to be vaccinated, and there will be more.

Recently, several of our Republican colleagues took to the floor of the Senate. They even invited over their fan club from the House. They lined up

right behind the speakers over on the Republican side of the aisle. And they are very strong in their feelings that the Speaker of the House should not require Members to wear masks.

Well, there is a reason for it, and the suggestion that the CDC has flip-flopped or that Dr. Fauci has flip-flopped belies the reality that the virus has flip-flopped. We are now dealing with something known as a Delta variant.

There is an urgent message for all Americans who have not been vaccinated: While you have been avoiding vaccination or waiting for just the right moment, the enemy—the COVID-19 virus—has not been idle. The Delta variant has arrived in a big and deadly way.

Here is what Dr. Rochelle Walensky, the Director of the CDC, said:

The Delta variant is more aggressive . . . more [transferable] than previously circulating strains. It is one of the most infectious respiratory [viruses] we know of . . . in my 20-year career.

Now, in case you dismiss Dr. Walensky as some nonsense-talking Democratic Socialist and you prefer the expertise of Tucker Carlson or Laura Ingraham on FOX, I hope you will not ignore the grim reality in the actual numbers: Over 90 percent of those infected, hospitalized, and dying from the coronavirus Delta variant are unvaccinated—over 90 percent. People infected by the coronavirus Delta variant may carry 1,000 times—1,000 times—as much virus and for a longer period of time as those who were infected with the original coronavirus. Those infected were more than twice as likely to be hospitalized than those infected by the original coronavirus.

Vaccines still are effective against the Delta variant and coronavirus. But don't believe, if you are unvaccinated, that you are safe around vaccinated people. Early new data shows that fully vaccinated people may be able to spread the Delta variant to others as readily as unvaccinated people.

In fact, it gets down to the very basics: Until America decides to make vaccination part of our survival, we will continue, sadly, to witness infections; hospitalizations; and deaths and, God forbid, more variants.

Leaders in both public and private sectors are stepping up. We should too. People should be tested regularly, if they insist on not being vaccinated, to show that they are not sick and not a danger to others. The COVID vaccines are safe, free, readily available, and almost miraculously effective, and they are the way out of this pandemic.

One more point about COVID protection: Many on the right are spitting mad and filled with feigned confusion about the CDC's new guidance urging people in COVID hotspots to wear masks indoors even if you are vaccinated.

They say: How can we trust an Agency that keeps changing its rules?

Because the virus is changing and the guidance is changing accordingly. The

virus has mutated and gained strength because tens of millions of Americans have refused to wear masks or get vaccinated.

Deliberate distortion and outraged speeches aren't going to stop the virus. If you want to take off the mask for good—and I sure do—if you want your kids to go to school without being burdened by a mask—and I certainly do—we need to tell the truth. Listen to the experts. Get the vaccine. Getting this virus behind us for good is the only way we can reopen America's economy.

In the longer term, the way to remain the world's preeminent economy is to invest in the fundamentals of strong, sustainable growth and shared prosperity.

It is good that the Senate is debating this plan. I hope that it passes this week as soon as possible, as well as our budget resolution. But in the meantime, we cannot ignore that the Nation is still in the throes of a pandemic.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a courtroom. The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

(Ms. CANTWELL assumed the Chair.)

(Mr. KING assumed the Chair.)

(Ms. WARREN assumed the Chair.)

(Ms. CANTWELL assumed the Chair.)

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Arizona.

H.R. 3684

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. President, it is my honor and privilege this evening to join with my fellow 9 Senators of the G-10 who have been working together for months now, along with an additional 12 colleagues, who together—the 22 of us Senators—have worked long and hard with each other and with the White House to introduce this evening the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

We know that this has been a long and sometimes difficult process, but we are proud this evening to announce this legislation, and we look forward, very much, to working with our colleagues in a collaborative and open way over the coming days to work